

EMPOWERED

A STRANGE DAY AT CHURCH

Acts 4:32 – 5:11 (ESV)

February 4, 2024

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MESSAGE NOTES

Experience the Grace of Giving:

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

– Acts 4:32 – 35 (ESV)

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul ... And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

– Acts 4:32 – 33 (ESV)

- **By discovering what you think you own is really on loan**

... and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common ... There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. – Acts 4:32, 34 – 35 (ESV)

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. – 2 Corinthians 9:8 (ESV)

- **By discovering the joy of meeting needs**

There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold ... – Acts 4:34 (ESV)

... and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. – Acts 4:35 (ESV)

Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

– Acts 4:36 – 37 (ESV)

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- **By discovering that growing in the grace of giving is really about the position of our heart**

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet.

— Acts 5:1 – 2 (ESV)

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." — Acts 5:3 – 4 (ESV)

When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. — Acts 5:5 (ESV)

And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things. — Acts 5:11 (ESV)

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Discussion Starter: Share some of the areas of ministry you serve in (or might want to serve in the future) as part of ENCOUNTER, in the community, or even among family and friends. Talk about why you serve or would want to serve in these ways.
- Read Acts 4:32 – 33. What was the unifying power that was bringing the early church together in Christ? What does it mean for someone to experience “great grace”?
- Read verse Acts 4:34. What ignited this intense spirit of generosity in the early church? Share what ignites a spirit of generosity in your life?
- Read 2 Corinthians 9:8. This verse speaks of growing in the “grace of giving” just as we grow in all areas of our faith. What is the key foundation in Christ that helps us grow in areas of generosity with our time, treasure, talent and touch?
- What are some of the barriers to serving in a church family? Wrestle with whether they are heart barriers, time barriers or church barriers.
- What are some of the differences that Acts displays between the generosity of Barnabas and the actions of Ananias and Sapphira?
- Read Acts 5:3 – 5. Why is the position of our heart before God the foundation of all areas of authentic generosity?
- What stood out to you the most in the passage and why?
- How does the giving of our time, talent, treasure and touch flow out of our growing experience of the undeserved grace of God?
- If God were to touch you with the depth of His grace right now, what part of your life would he want to unleash more of through the grace of giving: time, talent, treasure or touch (or a mixture of all the above)?